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Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament
Third substantive session
New York, 5-9 June 2017

Report of the Open-ended Working Group

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 65/66 of 8 December 2010, the General Assembly decided to convene an open-ended working group, working on the basis of consensus, to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of the preparatory committee, for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In its decision 70/551 of 23 December 2015, the Assembly decided to hold, in 2016, an organizational session of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament for the purpose of setting the dates for its three substantive sessions, consisting of five working days each, in 2016 and 2017, and that the Working Group should submit a report on its work, including possible substantive recommendations, before the end of the seventy-second session of the Assembly.

II. Organizational matters

A. Opening and duration of the organizational and substantive sessions

2. The Open-ended Working Group held an organizational session, on 22 February 2016, and three substantive sessions at United Nations Headquarters from 28 March to 1 April 2016, from 11 to 15 July 2016 and from 5 to 9 June 2017, under the chairmanship of Fernando Luque Márquez (Ecuador). In the course of those sessions, the Working Group held 28 meetings, including an organizational meeting. Consultations were also held by the Chair during the intersessional period.

3. The Disarmament and Peace Affairs Branch of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office for Disarmament Affairs served as the secretariat of the Working Group.

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4. At its 1st meeting (organizational meeting), on 22 February 2016, the Working Group adopted the agenda for its organizational session (A/AC.268/2016/1) and the timetable for its three substantive sessions (A/AC.268/2016/CRP.1).

B. Election of officers

5. At its 1st meeting, on 22 February, its 4th meeting, on 29 March, and 10th meeting, on 11 July 2016, the Working Group elected the following officers by acclamation for its three substantive sessions in 2016 and 2017:

Chair:

Fernando Luque Márquez (Ecuador)

Vice-Chairs:

George-Wilhelm Gallhofer (Austria)
Saada Daher Hassan (Djibouti)
Laura Comanescu (Romania) (served at the first and second sessions)

Rapporteur:

Ali Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran)

C. Programme of work

6. At its 2nd meeting, on 28 March 2016, its 10th meeting, on 11 July 2016, and its 20th meeting, on 5 June 2017, the Working Group adopted its programme of work as contained in documents A/AC.268/2016/CRP.2, A/AC.268/2016/CRP.3 and A/AC.268/2017/CRP.2, respectively, which read as follows:

1. Consideration of the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament.

2. Consideration of the possible establishment of the preparatory committee for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

3. Report of the Open-ended Working Group to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

D. Documentation

7. The Working Group had before it the following documents:

(a) Tentative timetable for substantive sessions (A/AC.268/2016/CRP.1 and Rev.1);

(b) Programme of work (A/AC.268/2016/CRP.2);

(c) Working paper submitted by the United States of America on consensus objectives and an agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/AC.268/2016/WP.1) (see annex);

(d) Proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement on the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/AC.268/2016/WP.2) (see annex);

(e) A niche model: working paper by Australia on consensus objectives and an agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/AC.268/2016/WP.3) (see annex);

(f) Objectives and an agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament: proposal by the Chair of the Working Group (A/AC.268/2016/WP.4 and Rev.1 and A/AC.268/2017/WP.5) (see annex).

III. Organization of work

8. At its 2nd meeting, on 28 March 2016, the Working Group decided to organize its work in accordance with the specific mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 65/66 to discuss the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee, for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Working Group agreed first to consider the objectives and agenda for the fourth special session devoted to disarmament.

9. During the time allocated for general comments at its 2nd and 4th to 6th meetings, from 28 to 30 March 2016, the Working Group heard general statements made by the representatives of Indonesia (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Libya (on behalf of the Arab Group), the Russian Federation, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group), the Dominican Republic (on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), Egypt, Indonesia, China, Cuba, Brazil, Nigeria, Japan, the United States, Morocco, Pakistan, India, Algeria, Malaysia, South Africa, France, Australia, Guatemala, Mexico, Argentina, Austria and Kazakhstan.

10. At its 4th meeting, on 29 March 2016, the Working Group heard a presentation by a former staff member of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, Randy Rydell, on the historical and political background of previous special sessions on disarmament, which was followed by an interactive discussion.

11. At its 9th meeting, on 1 April 2016, the Working Group decided to change the dates of its third substantive session from 10-14 July 2017 to 5-9 June 2017 (see A/AC.268/2016/CRP.1/Rev.1).

12. During the time allocated for general comments at its 10th meeting, on 11 July 2016, the Working Group heard general statements made by the representatives of the following countries: Australia, Indonesia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Egypt, Brazil, France, the United States, Japan, China, Cuba, Argentina, Chile, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Colombia, Libya, Pakistan, South Africa and Saudi Arabia.

13. At the 20th meeting, on 5 June 2017, the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs made a statement.

14. At the same meeting, during the time allocated for general comments, the Working Group heard general statements made by the representatives of the following countries: Australia, Cuba, Argentina, Slovenia, Croatia, Indonesia, Mexico, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Egypt, Israel, Brazil, the Netherlands, Czechia, Italy, Bulgaria, Austria, Japan, China, the United States, the Russian Federation and France.

IV. Conclusion and recommendations

15. In accordance with its mandate as contained in General Assembly resolution 65/66, the Working Group devoted 28 meetings to the consideration of the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. During the meetings, the Chair proposed questions to the Working Group in order to promote the discussion of the items on its agenda and prepared a working paper. The Working Group also had before it proposals submitted by

delegations. At the 26th meeting, on 8 June, the Chair introduced a working paper entitled "Objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" (A/AC.268/2017/WP.5).

16. The Working Group recommended the following:

Objectives

- To revitalize the process of disarmament on the basis of the universal principles elaborated in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly
- To reaffirm the principles and priorities set out in the Final Document
- To reaffirm the collective commitment of Member States to work towards achieving the shared disarmament goals, priorities and objectives, including those set forth in the Final Document
- To consider and assess the implementation of the Final Document adopted, in particular its Programme of Action, with a view to identifying ways and means to achieve further progress, inter alia, through the existing multilateral framework, in meeting the objectives and priorities, including nuclear disarmament, established in the Final Document
- To provide for a comprehensive consideration and review of issues in the field of disarmament and international security, with due consideration to developments, trends and new and existing security challenges affecting international stability
- To reaffirm the importance of the existing United Nations disarmament machinery, while considering ways to strengthen it and improve its effectiveness
- To promote multilateralism in the field of disarmament, enhancing cooperation and building confidence among States
- To adopt a consensus final document(s) with a view to making progress towards the disarmament objectives

Agenda

1. Examination of the implementation of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, including its Programme of Action, and assessment of the present situation in the field of disarmament and international security, with a view to identifying and elaborating ways and means to make further progress in this field, building upon the principles and priorities established in the Final Document.

2. Review of the functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery with a view to strengthening it, maintaining its relevance and increasing its effectiveness.

3. Determination and elaboration of concrete, practical and effective measures that advance disarmament and international security.

4. Adoption of a consensus final document(s) of the special session.

The Working Group decided to defer the issue of the possible establishment of a preparatory committee to the General Assembly.

17. The Working Group also decided to reflect in the annex to its report the documents listed in paragraph 7 above.

V. Adoption of the report of the Open-ended Working Group

18. At the 28th meeting, on 9 June 2017, the Rapporteur, Ali Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), introduced the draft report of the Working Group (A/AC.268/2017/CRP.3).

19. At the same meeting, the Working Group adopted, by consensus, the report of the Working Group and the recommendations contained therein regarding the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

Annex

Working paper submitted by the United States of America on consensus objectives and an agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/AC.268/2016/WP.1)

Proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement on the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/AC.268/2016/WP.2)

A niche model: working paper by Australia on consensus objectives and an agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/AC.268/2016/WP.3)

Objectives and an agenda for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament: proposal by the Chair of the Working Group (A/AC.268/2016/WP.4 and Rev.1 and A/AC.268/2017/WP.5)